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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR Sandoval **ORIGINAL DATE** 02/09/08
LAST UPDATED _____ **HB** 601
SHORT TITLE UNM Hepatitis C ECHO Program **SB** _____
ANALYST Williams

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY08	FY09		
	\$100.0	Recurring	General Fund

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act.

Relates to HB472, HB 601, SB 345

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Higher Education Department (HED)

Department of Health (DOH)

New Mexico Health Policy Commission (HPC)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Bill 601 appropriates \$100 thousand from the general fund to the Board of Regents of the University of New Mexico to support and expand the hepatitis C ECHO program at the University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The appropriation of \$100 thousand contained in this bill is a recurring expense to the general fund. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of fiscal year 2009 shall revert to the general fund.

This request was not submitted by UNM to the HED in the Fall 2007 budget cycle. Base funding in FY08 is included in both the UNM HSC budget as well as DOH. The January 2008 LFC report "Higher Education Department Review of Selected Research and Public Service Projects" discusses best practices for funding these types of projects.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

According to DOH, the bill would support the UNM/HSC Hepatitis C Program, which provides local access to Hepatitis C disease management and treatment services for infected persons living in rural and underserved communities across the state. The UNM/HSC Hepatitis C Program provides clinical consult services and intensive training to rural primary care physicians utilizing telehealth technology. Medical specialists at UNM/HSC provide expertise and co-manage care of Hepatitis C patients with the rural-based primary care physician.

Approximately 24,000 to 28,000 persons may be infected with Hepatitis C in the state (Hepatitis C Surveillance Report 2006, DOH). Specialist care for chronic diseases such as Hepatitis C is frequently unavailable in rural communities of the state. Persons infected with Hepatitis C may not pursue care until the disease has progressed and adverse medical consequences have occurred, ultimately resulting in a higher cost of care. The bill could promote local and affordable access to Hepatitis C management and treatment services, potentially leading to earlier initiation of medical care to persons living in those rural communities. DOH notes the bill does not detail how or where the funding would be used.

According to the HED, funding would expand the number of sites under the existing Hepatitis C Program; build a model program of rheumatology experts and of mental health disorder experts, and continue to sustain and expand the scope of the existing program by using its developed model to treat other complicated, chronic health conditions throughout rural areas of the state such as:

- Substance Use Disorder
- Behavioral/Mental Health
- HIV/AIDS
- Rheumatology
- Cardiac Risk Reduction
- Diabetes
- Weight Reduction
- Smoking Cessation
- High risk Pregnancy

The HPC states that through a \$2.8 million legislative allocation in 2005-2006, the Hepatitis Prevention Program entered into a partnership with the UNM Health Sciences Center, NM Corrections Department, and NM Primary Care Association to develop a model for providing chronic disease management services at primary care sites for HCV infected persons in rural or underserved communities of New Mexico. This model utilizes video-conferencing technology to provide specialty care across a spectrum of areas including gastroenterology, psychology, and substance use disorders. The Hepatitis C Initiative facilitates services including pharmaceutical treatment, where indicated, as well as case management for co-morbid conditions and substance use disorders. Currently there are 11 sites in operation throughout New Mexico

AW/bb